

E 687

.C59

Copy 1

To A. R. C. Chapman, Esq.
with a copy of the volume.

Book 11 P. 1

"OVER THE RESTLESS SEA."

[Elberon speaks. September 19, 1881, 10:35 P. M.]

I.

Ayl drape your homes in black,
And half mast droop the flag,
And bid the cannon sound with sullen sob,
And the drums beat with mournful muffled throb,
And, from their airy heights, the great bells toll,
Startling the silent night with passing of a soul,—
While o'er the trembling wire,
Flashes the electric fire
That turns to ashes every fond desire!
Britain shall answer back
From every wind-blown crag
Whereon the mad sea, vainly breaking, moans,
And France, with streaming eyes and solemn tones,
Shall lead the diapason of the world's regret;—
The sister lands, whose eyes with salt unwooned tears
are wet
For him, the stricken leader of the free,
Who, when his hour had come,
Left his white palace home
And sought the edge of the unresting sea,
His eager eyes delight to roam the boundless waters
o'er
While his great soul, impatient, chafes to leave be-
hind life's barren, bitter shore!

II.

Men watched, but no one saw
Whence came the messenger.
Came he from over sea or from the stars?
The angel, who, from out life's prison bars
Led that calm soul, so tranquilly and still,
That none might know, or dream, of naught of ill.
Above, the stars were shining;
Below, the waves repining,
With secret of strange grief beyond divining;
If force of occult law,
Or spell, if any were
Cast by the angry Gods, in their unending wrath
Nor may we know where led his unseen path.
Perchance, the thunder of the Billows' roar
Seemed like the echoing guns he heard of yore



E 687
C 59

When straight, as arrow flies, he went where need
was most,
—(So now down all the years
The same great call he hears!)—
To stand with Thomas 'mid his hard-pressed host, †
Instant he went—careless of life or death;—
So there: Fame found him and, forevermore,
Breathes his great name with her immortalizing
breath.

III.

Over the restless sea
To-morrow's sun shall rise;
The world shall wake, but he no more shall wake,
Who now majestic lies his rest to take.
Nor pain nor sorrow now can touch him more;
The bitterness of earthly life is o'er.
Power from his grasp has fled,
His days and rule are sped
And mourners wail beside their helpless dead.
Rigid and dumb lies he,
Deaf to all bitter cries
Wherewith love vainly strives to reach his heart.
Oh helpless human love, that Death can part
From all it holds most dear! Nor, seems it long
Ere life's bright feast is chilled by Death's dark
wrong!
Oh helpless, hapless, love, if Death end all!
'Twere better not to be,
If such our destiny,
And hateful Death holds us in bitter thrall!
The tyrant Death, who heeds nor love, nor power,
Nor stays, for prayers or tears, the appointed hour!

IV.

To-morrow's sun shall see
A weeping continent;
Oh vainly loved! For thee the world with prayers
For weary weeks besought the Power who cares,—
So One hath said,—for sparrows when they fall,
To spare thy life, but lo! Death answers all.
But what is "Death" to thee?
The word which sets thee free
And binds all hearts to thine in loving fealty!
Now, life begins to be,
And thou art well content;—
For Death hath led thee, where world-honors seem
Empty as phantoms of a fleeting dream.
At last the riddle of the Sphinx is plain,
Whate'er life had to give, to die were gain,
For progress is the law of endless life;

J. H. P. 12.2.10

The grave the open door,
Through which the soul doth soar,
Like a white dove, above the field of strife;
Her new found plumes she tries with sudden joy,
Winging her flight toward Heaven, again,
Whose unseen glories all her thoughts employ!

V.

Who then is he lies here,
And why do nations mourn?
How make in simplest words the answer plain,
How win from bitter loss some little gain?
Here, snatched from life by an insensate crime,
A hero lies,—cut off before his prime.
So died, on Trojan plain,
Fair youth untimely slain,
Nor, for their fate did any thus complain,
As they on funeral bier
To burial were borne;
For when on battle plain a hero dies,
Pride in his prowess mingles with our sighs.
But here, nor duty's call, nor wrath of foe,
Nor any open conflict, laid him low.
Secure he seemed from ill, whom Fortune gave
Her choicest gifts of power;—
Then struck the fated hour
And earth held nothing for him but a grave!
Oh strange, dark mystery which baffles thought,
That now, as in the olden days of woe,
The awful Fates their stern decrees have wrought!

VI.

Rules Fate our lives to day
As in that olden time
When the stern sisters gray their weird watch kept
Spinning the thread of life while mortals slept?
Then men the Parcae feared, for they man's life
Made brief or long, and filled with joy or strife.
The mighty Gods their wills obey,
For mightier than the Gods are they
Who life and death decree away.
Such homage ancient poets pay
The Sister Fates sublime.

We saw the proud procession on its way,
The armed pomp with floating banners gay;
We heard the joyous music thrill the air,
The people's glad huzzas, blent with the blare
Of trumpets, fiery flutes, and stirring drums,
While every eye was bent

On the new President
 Where, mid the clustering guards, at last, he comes!
 Who saw, that day, his friendly smile and manly bearing
 high
 Had thought, that with him as he went, dark Fate
 was passing by?

VII.

Now from my barren shore
 Let reverent hands upbear—
 The loving, tender hands that brought him here—
 And sadly place upon the funeral bier,
 All that is left to us of him we knew.
 Let prayers be said, and ample homage due
 Be paid, with sweet refrain
 Of music's saddest strain,
 And streaming tears that fall in bitter rain,
 For him who nevermore
 Our hopes or fears may share.
 From these salt waves to where the waters sweet
 Of his loved lake may play beneath his feet
 Take him with tender care; there it may seem,
 'Mid scenes of home, he sleeps in happy dream.
 Sleep well! my shores that knew thy parting breath
 Forevermore shall be
 Enlinked in History
 With thy great name, that triumphs over Death.
 For Death the conqueror is vanquished, when
 His conquered hero rules the hearts of men!

I. EDWARDS CLARKE.

*Written for the Garfield memorial meeting of The
 Literary Society of Washington, held Nov. 19, 1881.

†It will be remembered that the 19th of September
 is the anniversary of Chickamauga.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 789 911 5

